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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 001477

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FOR WHA/CCA DAVID MCFARLAND, AND EUR/WE/UK

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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [UK](#)  
SUBJECT: LIBERTAD ACT: UK INPUT

REF: A. STATE 52541  
[1](#)B. 07 LONDON 4346

Classified By: PolOff Leslie Tsou, reasons 1.4, b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) The following pertains to the UK's involvement in and relations with Cuba, keyed to questions posed in reftel:

[1](#)2. (C) Has the UK worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?

-- The UK's policy toward Cuba is consistent with the EU Common Policy, which was revised in 2006 in order to generate more dialogue between EU members and Cuban officials. The UK has worked actively within the EU to negotiate a middle ground for the common policy between those who would like to completely open relations with Cuba and those who would like to isolate it. The UK adopts a nearly universal policy of constructive engagement and believes that engaging more Cuban officials will allow it to identify those who are most likely to facilitate a democratic transition in Cuba. UK Embassy personnel in Cuba maintain frequent contact with opposition members there. HMG continues to have great difficulty getting visas for any British officials to visit Cuba because of their insistence on meeting with Cuban civil society in addition to Cuban officials.

[1](#)3. (C) Has the UK made other public statements or undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in Parliament condemning human rights abuses in Cuba; statement in support of democracy following the undemocratic succession of power from Fidel to Raul Castro; or actions in support of civil society in Cuba through diplomatic missions or other fora?

-- FCO officials regularly cite Cuba in their speeches as the only non-democratic country in Latin America, as Foreign Secretary Miliband did in a February speech at Oxford University on "The Democratic Imperative." In HMG's annual Human Rights Report, Cuba is listed as one of the 21 "Major Countries of Concern," noting particularly the detention of political prisoners and the lack of international access to prisons; the systematic denial of political, civil and economic freedoms; government harassment and intimidation of dissidents; and the death penalty. Ministers are frequently called upon to answer questions in Parliament about Cuban issues including the number of political prisoners held on the island, and their answers are generally in synch with USG views. The UK mission in Havana supports civil society NGOs with small project support, but seeks to do so in a way that does not overtly antagonize the regime.

[1](#)4. (C) Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and the UK in the past six months?

-- Cuban Vice Foreign Minister Caballero visited London in February and was met by FCO Minister for Latin America Meg Munn, who raised human rights concerns with him. The highest

level HMG visitor to Cuba was FCO Cuba Office Director Matthew Forbes, who was not received by Cuban officials because he insisted on meeting with members of the peaceful opposition.

15. (C) What is the nature of investment that UK businesses have in Cuba?

-- The FCO does not have or seek such information on UK businesses in Cuba.

16. (C) Are there any bilateral trade agreements between the UK and Cuba?

-- No.

17. (C) Are there any exchange programs between the UK and Cuba, including but not limited to: scholarships for UK nationals to study in Cuba, Cuban paid medical travel for UK nationals, and Cuban doctors working in the UK?

-- The only exchange program involving HMG is the Chevening Scholarship, which is a worldwide program that brings foreign nationals to UK universities to study. Under the program, approximately two-three Cubans are brought to the UK each year to study subjects that would facilitate a transition in Cuba, e.g., economics, journalism, law. There may be some Cuban doctors in the UK, but they are not in any way sponsored or received by HMG as a loan from Cuba.

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